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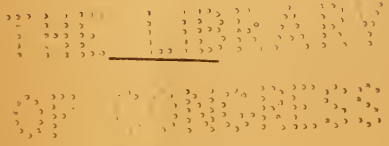
ALLED AWAY.

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS.



BY

RICHARD QUINN,

AUTHOR OF

"GLENORA," "INNISFAIL, OR THE WANDERER'S DREAM,"

ETC.

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CHARACTERS.

MARSHALL EARLE.
ROBERT CLARKSON.
LESLIE MILLER.
WILLIE MILLER.
TONY GILLESPIE.
MR. ELLIOTT.
MUGGINS.
WALTER.
LAURA MILLER.
MRS. MILLER.
SALLIE.

Time: The Present.

Costumes: Modern.

PROPERTIES.

ACT I.—Newspaper, sealed package containing diamond brooch in velvet case, five-dollar bill, door-bell, call-bell, dog, engagement ring, tidy, trust-deed, revolver, and papers.

ACT II.—Satchels, bundles, money, soiled letter, charm, lock of hair, glass, wine, fishing-rod, telegram.

ACT III.—Pen, ink, paper, newspaper, pipe, tobacco, matches, blank checks, notarial seal, letter, two revolvers, two masks, two watches, bottle of poison, glass, key.

ACT IV.—Fan, tea-pot, two tea-cups and saucers, sugar, cream, two spoons, rose, check-book, pipe, tobacco.

ACT I.—The home of the Millers. GATHERING CLOUDS.
ACT II.—Sylvania Lake. CALLED AWAY.
ACT III.—Clarkson at work. THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.
ACT IV.—At home. A DOUBLE PARTNERSHIP.

Six months are supposed to elapse between Acts III. and IV.

CALLED AWAY.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A beautifully furnished drawing-room. Doors* R., L., *and* C. *Small table* R. C. *Easy-chair* R. C. *Settee* L. *Two chairs* L. C. *Piano* R. LESLIE MILLER *discovered at rise reading newspaper.* MRS. MILLER *at piano playing. Enter* WALTER, C., *with small sealed package, which he hands to* MILLER. *Exit* WALTER, L.

MILLER. It has come at last. (*Puts package in his pocket.*)

MRS. MILLER. (*Turning abruptly from piano.*) What has come at last?

MILLER. Did I say something had come at last?

MRS. M. I understood you to have said so.

MILLER. Then my thoughts must have been wandering.

MRS. M. But you surely meant something, Leslie?

MILLER. What makes you think so?

MRS. M. Oh, nothing. But you wear an unusually dejected look this evening. I have noticed it ever since you came home.

MILLER. Even so, I cannot help it. I would look brighter if I could.

MRS. M. (*Crosses to him and lays her hand upon his shoulder.*) And will you not confide the cause to your wife? You have never kept any secret from me!

MILLER. But I have no secret to confide, Ethel.

MRS. M. Oh, Leslie, something tells me you have heard bad news, which you are afraid will distress me!

MILLER. I assure you I have no news, good or bad, to relate.

MRS. M. (*Aside.*) Then what could he have meant when he said, "It has come at last"? (*To* MILLER.) In what direction were your thoughts wandering when you said, "It has come at last"?

MILLER. My dear Ethel, I cannot very well answer your

question. I assure you, however, that no misfortune has overtaken me, and that I have no bad news to break to you.

MRS. M. Perhaps, you remember, several years ago you predicted—

MILLER. Pardon me, but I am afraid you are about to enter upon a forbidden subject.

MRS. M. I know I promised you never to mention his name, but I fear I must speak—

MILLER. Yet you know how disagreeable the subject is to me and you cannot have forgotten the bitter memories with which it is associated.

MRS. M. I know it is the dark shadow hovering over the happy sunshine of our lives, but, after all—

MILLER. Enough! enough! When the doors of this house were closed against him seven years ago my heart was also closed against him; it has been closed against him since and shall remain closed against him forever.

MRS. M. Ah, do not say *forever;* it is a terrible word. Who knows what changes time may bring about?

MILLER. I mean what I say, Ethel. My decision is absolutely irrevocable.

MRS. M. Has it never occurred to you that you might have erred in your judgment?

MILLER. Never. You know very well that the proofs of his guilt were only too strong. Had I seen any possible way out of the clear, cold facts which were arrayed against him, would I, his father, condemn him? No; an outcast he is and an outcast he shall remain.

MRS. M. You will pardon me, but I thought it was something concerning him that was weighing on your mind—

MILLER. Nothing of the kind. I never give him a thought.

MRS. M. What I was about to say when you interrupted me was, that you predicted he would some day bring a still greater disgrace on his family, and when you said, "It has come at last," I thought it had come.

MILLER. No such thought disturbed my mind. The fact is, we have been unwittingly drawn into conversation on a subject which should never be mentioned—

MRS. M. True, but our poor boy—

MILLER. Has dishonored his parents and has been a disgrace to them. Let us end the subject—yes, end it. Talk about anything else under heaven.

MRS. M. Then you meant nothing when you said—

MILLER. I did mean something, Ethel.

MRS. M. I am very curious to know what it was.

MILLER. It is scarcely necessary for you to say so. Your curiosity is very evident.

MRS. M. Say, rather, my anxiety for your happiness.

MILLER. Well, let it be so. This is the twenty-first anniversary of our marriage, is it not?

MRS. M. Yes; why?

MILLER. Three or four days ago I ordered a little trinket to commemorate the event, and I was disappointed at not finding it here when I came home.

MRS. M. Yes?

MILLER. When Walter brought it to me I simply said, "It has come at last," and here it is. (*Gives her package.*)

MRS. M. (*Opening package, nervously.*) I wonder what it is? Ah, a diamond brooch! How beautiful! How good of you, Leslie! (*Takes it out of velvet case.*) And what an exquisite design! It must have cost you a little fortune.

MUGGINS. (*Without.*) I must see the boss myself. My business is too important to trust to servants.

Enter MUGGINS *and* WALTER, C.

WALTER. This fellow came in, in spite of me, sir.

MILLER. (*Rises.*) Walter, give the gentleman a chair and take his hat.

MUGGINS. Yer only guyin' me now.

MILLER. And call an officer at once.

MUGGINS. Hold on, sir, jist a minute. I'm not used to such luxuries. They're comin' too swift.

MILLER. Then state your business very briefly and get out. (*To* WALTER.) Remain here until he goes.

MUGGINS. How about that ad. for the tarrier, and five dollars reward, and no questions asked?

MILLER. Have you the dog?

MUGGINS. Me pard snuk him from the dog-ketchers and sent me as a committee of one to see what there was in it.

MILLER. Bring the dog and you will get the reward.

MUGGINS. On the dead? Then I'll fetch him right in.

[*Exeunt* MUGGINS *and* WALTER, C.

MRS. M. Didn't I tell you Keelo was being held for a reward?

MILLER. I thought so myself. (*Sits.*)

MRS. M. But you didn't seem very anxious to advertise.

MILLER. Perhaps not. Dogs are a nuisance anyway.

MRS. M. You don't mean that I—

MILLER. Oh, dear no; not at all.

MRS. M. Of course, there's such a thing as carrying fads

to extremes. There's that highly accomplished little woman, Mrs. Frisby, for instance—

MILLER. Don't mention.

MRS. M. Why, she paid almost as much attention to her poodles as to her guests the other evening.

MILLER. If she could only "see herself as others see her"—

(*Door bell rings.* MRS. M. *puts brooch in case and sets it on table.*)

MRS. M. (*Going toward door*, C.) I suppose the poor creature is half starved.

MILLER. Give him the money and let him go. I don't want such a suspicious-looking character around the house any longer than is necessary.

Enter ROBERT CLARKSON, C.

CLARKSON. Upon my word, a nice reception! Half-starved creatures—suspicious-looking characters and so forth. Really, Mr. Miller, I thought you were above making such insinuations. (*Laughs.*)

MILLER. (*Rises.*) Confound it all, man, it's that dog of Mrs. Miller's that was lost.

MRS. M. We were just expecting the man who had been holding him.

CLARK. Some cunning rascal, I'll be bound.

MILLER. Yes, and an original character in his way. His only drawback is his modesty.

Re-enter WALTER *and* MUGGIN, C., *with dog.*

MUGGINS. Here you are, boss. My pard kept him well. See? Three square meals a day and bones besides. Seein' as how he had a high-toned swagger to his gait, we knowed the owners would do what was right by us.

MRS. M. (*Calling dog.*) Keelo, Keelo—here Keelo!

MILLER. (*Gives money to* MUGGINS.) Here are five dollars.

MUGGINS. Thank you, sir. You're de stuff. (*Aside to* CLARKSON.) What, you here? See you later. Ta ta.

[*Exeunt* MUGGINS *and* WALTER, C.

MRS. M. Come, Keelo, Keelo. Little Keelo must be hungry. [*Exit* MRS. MILLER, R.

MILLER. (*Aside.*) I'd have given him ten dollars willingly if he kept the little cur. (*Returns to chair.*)

CLARK. (*Crosses to* MILLER.) Now that a favorable opportunity presents itself, I was about to say—

MILLER. Yes?

CLARK. I was about to say—that is, I said—what I intended to say was—

MILLER. Go on, Robert.

CLARK. This is the eventful decision of the evening—no, the—pardon me—the decision of the eventful evening—the evening of the eventful decision—I confess I'm somewhat embarrassed, sir.

MILLER. Slightly rattled, that's all.

CLARK. Laura promised to—to give me an answer this evening provided you consented.

MILLER. You shall see my daughter and receive the answer from herself. Pardon me while I inform her that you are here.

CLARK. Certainly. [*Exit* MILLER, R.

CLARK. If I had not played my cards so well, I would retreat even now at the eleventh hour; but there's too much at stake. Laura Miller has her own free will. Should she decide in my favor—and I fondly hope she will—I shall reform at once and live honestly on her money. (*Crosses and sits at table.*) Well, she's old enough to know her own mind. (*Sees case on table, opens it.*) Hello, what have we here? Diamonds, eh! That centre stone must weigh at least about two carats. It's a gem. (*Puts it back, goes up, looks around, returns, pauses, takes case.*) These sparkling little gems would help me out of a very unpleasant predicament I happen to be placed in just now, in addition to reimbursing me for the amount I expended on the engagement ring. But I would not dare to confiscate them. Oh, no. (*Holds brooch up to the light, puts it in his pocket, sets case on table.*) Who then? Who but that suspicious-looking character that brought the dog. I strongly suspect him already. (*Sits and reads newspaper.*)

Enter MILLER, R.

MILLER. My wife and daughter want to hold a little council of war, so we shall adjourn to the library if you have no objection.

CLARK. Nothing could give me more pleasure.

[*Exeunt* MILLER *and* CLARKSON, C.

Re-enter MRS. MILLER, R.

MRS. M. Oh dear, what a surprise I have in store for Laura! I will not show her my beautiful present until she has seen Robert. The dear girl will be so anxious to meet him. (*Listens,* L. *Music.*) She's coming. (*Crosses to table, takes case hurriedly.*) I'll put it in my pocket (*fumbles for*

pocket). I can't find it. I never could find it. Oh dear, dear, I never will find it! (*Puts case on table and throws tidy over it; sits down with a sigh. Music stops.*)

Enter LAURA, R.

LAURA. Mamma, dear, I'm sorry I kept you waiting, but I'm dreadfully nervous.

MRS. M. It's only imagination, my child. I never saw you looking better. There's the faintest little tinge of sadness in your eyes. You have not been crying, I hope?

LAURA. (*Casts her eyes downward.*)

MRS. M. (*Aside.*) She's too truthful to deny it.

LAURA. I have some strange misgivings, mamma. I fear I shall never see a happy day again.

MRS. M. What perfect nonsense! I always gave you credit for possessing some common sense. Why, instead of trying to think of something to make you miserable, you should conjure up your sweetest smile, appear in your most engaging manner, and look your prettiest. I know that was what I did.

LAURA. That is all very well, but—

MRS. M. And if I had had my own way, I would have married a worthless fellow and been in misery every day of my life. But I was guided by my mother, and I have been ever grateful to her for the advice which she gave me, and blessing my stars that I followed it.

LAURA. Perhaps the circumstances in your case were slightly different from mine, mamma.

MRS. M. Not at all, my child. I believe I am acting for your best interests, but of course you are at perfect liberty to do as you please. Your father is satisfied to leave everything to your own good judgment and sense of duty. So am I.

LAURA. Has it ever occurred to you that Marshall Earle—

MRS. M. Your father's clerk! What would your friends say? The gossips would not wish for anything better. Laura Miller, with all her opportunities and accomplishments, married to her father's clerk! Wouldn't it sound nicely?

LAURA. Papa thinks the world of him.

MRS. M. From a purely business point of view. But you must not forget what a difference there is between his social position and Robert's.

LAURA. Young men too ambitious to shine in society don't always make the best husbands.

MRS. M. Be that as it may, I do not think that Marshall

is entitled to your consideration. He would never aspire to marry you, and even if he did, he could not provide a home for you anything like what you're accustomed to.

LAURA. Very well, mamma dear, you know best.

MRS. M. (*Kisses her.*) You are a dear, good girl, Laura.

[*Exit* MRS. MILLER, R.

LAURA. Oh dear! (*Sighs.*) Why have I been so foolish as to cherish so warm an affection for Marshall Earle! My heart tells me I can never love Robert. I don't care. It would be cruel to forget Marshall. I fear there will be a terrible struggle, 'twixt love and duty, and should love win —ah! then the clouds will gather.

Re-enter MILLER *and* CLARKSON, C.

MILLER. Where's your mother, Laura?

LAURA. She just went up-stairs, papa.

MILLER. Oh, yes, yes; I had almost forgotten.

[*Exit* MILLER, R.

CLARK. Laura, I'm delighted to see you.

LAURA. Be seated, Robert.

CLARK. Thank you, but I must first learn my fate.

LAURA. Your fate?

CLARK. Yes, Laura, my fate. That one little word which now trembles on your lips has a world of meaning for me. I have asked myself a hundred times, Will it mean that the dream of my life is to be realized at last, or will it mean that my future shall be an aimless existence of monotonous misery?

LAURA. It may mean either, just as you take it; it is *yes.*

CLARK. You have made me happier than I ever hoped to be.

LAURA. How can you say so? Another girl may make you just as happy.

CLARK. Another girl, indeed! You are the only girl in the world to me. I love you as truly and as devotedly as a man ever loved a woman. (*Puts engagement ring on her finger.*) Why, Laura, you are trembling, your hand is shaking. (*Kisses her hand.*) You are not ill, I hope? (*Assists her to settee.*)

LAURA. I don't feel very well, Robert. The excitement of this evening has made me a little nervous, that is all.

CLARK. Shall I ring the bell?

LAURA. No, no. I'll be all right, presently. (CLARKSON *sits beside her.*)

CLARK. Laura, was I conceited when I thought that you reciprocated my affection?

LAURA. Men are never conceited. (*Laughs.*)

CLARK. Oh, no, but do you really—

LAURA. There's no use asking, I won't tell you.

CLARK. The silent language of the eye oft tells more than words. Do I read my answer in yours?

LAURA. You were always very clever at solving riddles.

CLARK. Have I not arrived at the correct solution this time?

LAURA. Don't tease me any more about it, Robert. Here comes mamma.

Re-enter MRS. MILLER, R.

MRS. M. Oh dear! oh dear! What has Robert been saying to you, Laura?

LAURA. Just talking nonsense, mamma. (*Shows ring.*)

MRS. M. (*Embraces her.*) How shall I ever part with my dear girl!

Re-enter MILLER, R.

MILLER. Well, Robert, did you get your little speech off?

CLARK. Yes, Mr. Miller.

MILLER. Very good, my boy, very good. Laura is a good girl, and you're not a bad sort of fellow, eh, Robert?

CLARK. I hope I shall prove worthy of your daughter, sir.

MILLER. Of course, of course you will. Laura, what have you to say?

LAURA. Nothing, papa.

MRS. M. Nothing! The idea!

LAURA. If anything should be said, I know, mamma dear, you will say it for me.

MILLER. Robert, when you get ready to go housekeeping, let me know. I want to have a word with you. Ever since that memorable night I have not forgotten how much I owe you.

CLARK. You owe me nothing, Mr. Miller.

MILLER. Do you call my life nothing? That ruffian might have killed me if you had not come to my assistance.

CLARK. No one but a coward would see a respected citizen waylaid by a footpad and not do as I did.

MRS. M. It makes me shudder to think of that night. When Robert brought you home with blood streaming down your face, I thought your time had surely come.

LAURA. And to think that the unfeeling brute escaped!

CLARK. It is too bad. But there is a little romance connected with the affair which makes Laura a heroine—.

MRS. M. And Robert a hero. (*Door-bell rings.*) Come, Laura, dear, and Robert.

[*Exeunt* MRS. M., LAURA, *and* CLARKSON, R.

MILLER. I see no reason why Robert won't make Laura a good husband. She seems to like him, and he betrays a deep affection for her. They have surely known each other long enough. Any man couldn't help being happy with Laura.

Enter MARSHALL EARLE, C.

MILLER. Hello, Marshall, you look serious. What has happened?

MARSHALL. I have come to see you on very urgent business.

MILLER. What's the matter now?

MAR. Your brother, Lindsay Miller, of Mansfield, Ohio, has considerable real estate in Cook County, has he not, Mr. Miller?

MILLER. Yes.

MAR. And he is, I understand, very wealthy.

MILLER. I believe he is worth a few hundred thousand.

MAR. Then it is reasonable to assume that he would not mortgage a portion of his property for a consideration of five thousand dollars.

MILLER. Lindsay mortgage his property! You have not been drinking, Marshall?

MAR. No, sir.

MILLER. Then what are you talking about?

MAR. This note (*gives* MILLER *trust-deed*), which Mr. Whiting gave me, purports to be made by your brother. It is signed by him.

MILLER. (*They sit at table and examine it.*) That is not my brother's signature.

MAR. Mr. Whiting discovered too late, it seems, that there was something wrong. You had left the office only a few minutes when he called.

MILLER. What did you say to him?

MAR. I told him I would see you at the earliest possible moment and telegraph your brother.

MILLER. Has the money been raised on this paper?

MAR. Yes, sir. Mr. Whiting made a loan of three thousand dollars after an examination of the title.

MILLER. Who negotiated the loan?

MAR. A broker named Wilmot.

MILLER. Who identified the parties?

MAR. Robert Clarkson.

MILLER. Robert Clarkson! Impossible.

MAR. Mr. Whiting is very positive.

MILLER. What has he done about it?

MAR. He has reported the matter at police headquarters, and a detective is now looking up the parties.

MILLER. Have you telegraphed my brother?

MAR. No, sir.

MILLER. There is no necessity. This note is a forgery.

MAR. Perhaps Mr. Clarkson could throw some light on the subject.

MILLER. I don't like to ask him, Marshall.

MAR. I shall see him if you wish.

MILLER. No. Robert is my guest this evening. The fact is, my daughter's engagement to him will be announced in a few days. This is confidential.

MAR. Indeed, sir! Of course that alters the situation. But that is all the more reason why he should be informed of what has taken place.

MILLER. Perhaps so. I shall see him, but I am sure he can give a satisfactory explanation of the affair.

[*Exit* MILLER, R.

MAR. (*Rises.*) Mr. Miller had a greater surprise in store for me than I had for him. (*Pauses.*) "My daughter's engagement to him will be announced in a few days." I fondly hoped to figure in that announcement myself. (LAURA *appears at door*, R., *unobserved by* MARSHALL.) Such is the reward of many a man's true and unselfish love. I'll never love a woman again. Ah, Laura, when your wedding bells are merrily ringing, little will you dream of the hopes you have shattered, of the heart you have broken!

Enter LAURA.

MAR. (*Starts.*) Laura!

LAURA. *Miss Miller*, if you please. I'm engaged to be married.

MAR. I beg your pardon.

LAURA. You never really cared for me, did you, Mar— I mean *Mr.* Earle?

MAR. No, Miss Miller. I have been dissembling.

LAURA. I thought so. It would not concern you much whether I married another or not?

MAR. No. When the dearest treasure of the heart is stolen, what is left to be concerned about?

LAURA. Won't you wish me well, at all events?

MAR. I could not wish you otherwise.

LAURA. And you'll forgive me and forget—

MAR. I have nothing to forgive, but I cannot forget you.

LAURA. Don't you want your presents returned?

MAR. No. If you don't care to keep them, give them to one of your servants.

LAURA. You won't think me awfully wicked, will you, Marshall?

MAR. I cannot think anything but good of you. I shall try to make myself believe that you were wise in casting me aside and—and—breaking my heart.

LAURA. Marshall, you are breaking mine!

MAR. Laura—*Miss* Miller!

LAURA. Don't look so surprised. Can't you understand me?

MAR. I cannot.

LAURA. I'm engaged to Robert Clarkson.

MAR. Your father told me so.

LAURA. But he did not tell you that *I* had made up my mind that I would never marry him.

MAR. Then you became engaged—

LAURA. To please my mother. She almost insisted. What could I do? I never liked him.

MAR. I am glad for your sake.

LAURA. Why for my sake?

MAR. Because the engagement would be likely to be broken off.

LAURA. How do you know?

MAR. A certain business transaction of Mr. Clarkson's may get him into trouble.

LAURA. Is it anything very serious?

MAR. Forgery.

LAURA. Forgery!

MAR. Yes.

LAURA. Does papa know about it?

MAR. I did not tell him all I knew.

LAURA. Oh, then, that was what you came to see him about?

MAR. Yes.

LAURA. But you're going to tell him all you know?

MAR. I am placed in a very peculiar position. Were I a disinterested party, I certainly should not hesitate to tell your father all I know. It is my duty as far as the business of his office is concerned.

LAURA. Marshall, are you a friend of mine?

MAR. I am, Laura.

LAURA. Will you take my advice?

MAR. Yes.

LAURA. *Do your duty.* (LAURA *goes to door* R., *but hearing* MR. MILLER *coming, goes off* C.)

MAR. (*After a pause.*) Duty is the word.

Enter MR. MILLER, R.

MAR. Did Mr. Clarkson give you a satisfactory explanation, sir?

MILLER. Not exactly.

MAR. Then you are not quite convinced that he is innocent?

MILLER. No. What is your opinion?

MAR. I believe that he is guilty of forgery.

MILLER. This is a very serious charge to make against a man's character. You must be careful not to repeat it, or it may get you into no end of trouble.

MAR. I would not make an assertion of this kind unless I could prove it. Now, Mr. Miller, if, on account of Mr. Clarkson's relations with your family, you wish me to remain silent, I shall do so.

MILLER. No, no, no. I want you to tell me everything you know about this business.

MAR. First of all, I must tell you Robert Clarkson was one of the conspirators—

MILLER. Why, was there a conspiracy?

MAR. Mr. Whiting informed me that there was. The conspiracy numbered several sharpers. These men devised means to raise large sums of money on forged trust deeds, which were almost perfect in every detail. Their system was very business like. One did the actual forging, another negotiated the loans, and a third identified the parties.

MILLER. Perhaps Mr. Clarkson's connection with these men was purely accidental?

MAR. Then why did he have their seals in his possession?

MILLER. Did you see them?

MAR. Yes; he left two in a drawer of my desk one afternoon. More through curiosity than anything else, I made a few impressions of one of them on my memorandum book. Mr. Clarkson happened in just at the time and tore the leaves out of my book.

MILLER. Then your proof is lost?

MAR. No; I chanced to make an impression on the cover which he did not notice.

MILLER. Let me see it.

MAR. (*Gives him vest-pocket memorandum book.*) See, the

impressions are exactly the same. (*Comparing book with trust-deed at table.*)

MILLER. Exactly.

Enter ROBERT CLARKSON, R.

CLARK. I thought I had better come down and see Mr. Earle myself. Where is the paper?

MAR. This is the forged trust-deed. (*Gives it to him.*)

CLARK. I don't know anything about it.

MAR. But you have seen the seal from which that impression was made.

CLARK. Let me see. "*John Davidson, Notary Public, Mansfield, Ohio.*" No; I've never seen it.

MAR. You left a seal on my desk a few days ago.

CLARK. Oh, yes, yes. That belonged to the Metropolitan Investment Company.

Mar. You saw me take some impressions of it.

CLARK. Yes. Where are they? (*Laughs.*)

MAR. You tore some of them out of my memorandum book, but yet left one. Do you want to see it?

CLARK. Young man, do not provoke me too far or I may be tempted to punish you.

MAR. Mr. Clarkson, you cannot deter me by threats from doing my duty. When the proper time comes, sir, I shall prove—

CLARK. You can prove nothing, sir. I see what your little game is, and I shall expose you. Had you dared to make such insinuations anywhere else, I would prove to you that it would be to your lasting disadvantage. Do you hear me? (*Strikes* MARSHALL; *they struggle;* MARSHALL *knocks him down.*)

MILLER. Gentlemen, you're both excited. For my sake drop the subject.

CLARK. But I won't submit to be insulted—

MILLER. If you have no regard for my feelings, have a little, at least, for my daughter's. Such conduct is disgraceful. I won't tolerate it. (MARSHALL *sits*, R., CLARKSON, L.)

Enter MRS. MILLER *and* LAURA, R.

MRS. M. It is a perfect dream, Laura.

LAURA. Don't be teasing me about it, mamma. Can't you tell me what it is?

MRS. M. (*Goes to table, takes brooch case and holds it toward* LAURA.) Now feast your eyes. Isn't it beautiful?

LAURA. Beautiful! I don't see anything.

MRS. M. (*Excitedly looks in case, feels neck of dress, turns over everything on table.*) Oh, Leslie, it is gone! it is gone! What shall I do?

MAR. What is gone, Mrs. Miller? (*Rises.*)

MRS. M. A beautiful diamond brooch which Mr. Miller gave me only half an hour ago. I'm sure it was in this case when I left it on the table. Oh, dear! oh, dear!

CLARK. (*Rises.*) Some one must have stolen it. I didn't half like the looks of that man who brought the dog.

MILLER. There was no one else here who would have taken it. But if it's gone, it's gone. There's no use worrying about it, Ethel. I'll get you another.

MRS. M. Oh, but I wouldn't wish to have lost it for anything! It was such a genuine surprise, too.

Enter MR. ELLIOTT *and* WALTER, C.

ELLIOTT. Put on your hat, Mr. Clarkson, and come with me to the Central Station. The chief wants to see you.

CLARK. Who are you?

ELL. (*Unbuttons coat and shows star.*) I've been looking for you all day.

CLARK. Why, officer, I bet you a hundred dollars to one—

ELL. No, no. You don't come that racket on me.

CLARK. Have you got a warrant?

ELL. Yes.

CLARK. Oh, well, I'll see the chief. Of course, it will be all right. (*To* WALTER.) Walter, I want you to give these papers— (*Giving him papers.*)

ELL. I'll take care of them if you have no objection. (*Takes them and searches him.*)

CLARK. I'll surrender no papers. I protest I say. This is illegal.

ELL. I have a little to say about that.

CLARK. I'm an innocent man, but I protest being searched like a common thief.

ELL. You do, eh? Important papers, concealed weapons, and diamonds! (*Shows them.*)

MRS. M. Leslie! Laura! my brooch! (*Staggers to chair overcome.*)

MILLER. Officer, that brooch belongs to my wife.

ELL. I'll see that you get it back, sir, but I'll have to take it to the station.

CLARK. Walter, bring me my hat.

[*Exit* WALTER, C.

LAURA. (*Takes off engagement ring, throws it indignantly to* CLARKSON.) There !

CLARK. Sweetest Laura, you would not desert your intended husband in an affliction like this ! I'm merely a victim of kleptomania.

MR. MILLER. Officer, will you kindly remove that man.

CLARK. So you would turn against me, would you ? I'm devilish sorry I did not let you get your skull fractured when I had the chance.

Re-enter WALTER *with hat,* C.

CLARK. Are you with me, Walter ?

WALTER. Yes, Mr. Clarkson. You have one friend.

MRS. M. The deceitful brute!

CLARK. Another county heard from. You thought I'd marry your daughter, did you ! You can rest assured I never cared for her—wouldn't have her if she were worth a cool million.

MAR. Insulting coward, you dare not make use of such language if an officer were not present.

CLARK. Hello ! Who are *you?*

LAURA. He's a man. *You* are a coward !

MILLER. An ingrate !

MAR. A forger !

MRS. M. And a thief !

MRS. MILLER. MR. MILLER. CLARKSON.
LAURA. MARSHALL. ELLIOTT. WALTER.

Slow CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Set summer hotel,* R., *with practical door. Trees,* L. *View of lake at back. Garden bench,* L. C. *Two rustic chairs,* R. C. *Business of stopping of horses and alighting from 'bus. Time—Sunset. Sign,* "*Lake View Hotel.*"

Enter TONY GILLESPIE *carrying satchels and bundles, which he throws down at hotel door.*

SALLIE. (*Without,* L.) Hey there, Tony! Be careful.

TONY. Sure it's as tinder as eggs I'm after lavin' 'em out of me two hands.

Enter SALLIE, L. 1 E.

Is that yourself, Sallie? Sure I thought 'twas one o' the ladies that was spakin' to me.

SALLIE. An' wasn't it a lady, you omadhaun?

TONY. Who said it wasn't?

SALLIE. *You* did, and I won't spake to you any more, that's what I won't.

TONY. An' sure if you don't, Sallie dear, there's thim that will.

SALLIE. Oh, you think because Miss Nellie takes a little notice of you, common folks are not good enough for you any more.

TONY. Will ye listen to that! Be the powers, it's short 'till we can't have a civil word for anybody. Look at the way she's tossin' her head! (*Crosses to* SALLIE.) Sallie, acushla, what's ails you?

SALLIE. It's none of your concarn.

TONY. You needn't look that scornful at me.

SALLIE. You're deceitful, Tony, that's what you are.

TONY. Sallie! (*She turns away.*) Sallie! (*She looks at him.*) Come hether.

SALLIE. Well?

TONY. It's purtier you're gettin' every day.

SALLIE. You're a flatterin' rogue, Tony.

TONY. Faith an' sure it's the truth I'm spakin'.

SALLIE. Only for you're so mean I was goin' to tell you somethin'.

TONY. What is it?

SALLIE. You don't like me as you used to.

TONY. Do ye hear that, now? An' sure it's head over heels in love wid ye I am.

SALLIE. G'long out o' that, an' you're nothin' else.

TONY. Oh, look at that, will ye! You said you had somethin' to tell me, an' I was makin' it aisy for you.

SALLIE. You don't know what I was goin' to say.

TONY. Are you sure? There now, don't be blushin'. Any saycret you may confide in me will remain locked in my heart forever.

SALLIE. Are you sure you won't tell anybody?

TONY. Sure, I won't.

SALLIE. On your word.

TONY. On my word.

SALLIE. Well, Tony—

TONY. Yis, darlin'?

SALLIE. Oh, I can't.

TONY. Never fear. Go on.

SALLIE. The missus said—

TONY. Yis?

SALLIE. She said you should—

TONY. Should what?

SALLIE. Feed the pigs after supper. (SALLIE *runs off into hotel, laughing.* TONY *goes to door, kicking himself; he gathers up satchels, etc.*)

[*Exit* TONY, R. U. E.

Enter MRS. MILLER *and* LAURA *from hotel.*

LAURA. I do not know what you ever saw in Robert Clarkson, mamma. You know that I never more than tolerated him, and yet—

MRS. M. Hush, child! The less said on *that* subject now, the better. (*They sit on bench.*) We have come to this quiet retreat to seek a much-needed rest.

LAURA. For your sake, I sincerely hope we'll find it.

Re-enter SALLIE *from hotel.*

SALLIE. Beggin' your pardon, m'am, I heard you were lookin' for a nice, tidy girl to do housework.

MRS. M. Yes.

SALLIE. I'll be lookin' for a place in a couple of weeks.

MRS. M. Can you come well recommended?

SALLIE. Yis, indeed, m'am. You were recomminded very highly to me. Sure you're a born lady, an' it's wid you I'd be contint intirely.

MRS. M. How long have you been here?

SALLIE. Ever since I landed, m'am.

MRS. M. Where did you come from?

SALLIE. From Skibbereen, in the County Cork, next door to the Post Office.

MRS. M. If I do give you a trial and you should suit me, will you stay with me?

SALLIE. 'Tisn't skiddadling from you I'd be thinkin' of until my welcome would be worn out.

MRS. M. Are you dissatisfied here?

SALLIE. No, m'am, but I'm tould you give two afternoons and three evenin's off every week, besides every other Sunday.

MRS. M. I think you would be slightly disappointed.

SALLIE. Oh, no, m'am; sure I'm aisly satisfied.

MRS. M. I shall let you know before I return, Sallie.

SALLIE. Thank you, m'am. (*Bows and goes off*, L. 1 E.)

Enter MARSHALL, *carrying fishing rod*, L. U. E.

MRS. M. Well, Marshall, did you catch any fish?

MAR. Three bass and a pickerel.

MRS. M. Where did you leave Mr. Miller?

MAR. On the pier with Ollie.

[*Exeunt* MRS. MILLER *and* LAURA, L. U. E.

MAR. (*Taking fishing rod apart. Music.*) It seems to me that Mrs. Miller is determined that Laura and I shall be together as little as possible. My affection for Laura grows stronger every day—the more I see of her, the more anxious I am to be in her society. Yet I fear that I will some day in the uncertain future look back to my fondly cherished love for her as but an idle dream—a beautiful vision that enchanted my soul and was lost to me, forever. (*Coming down* C.)

The fairest flower that grows below,
The brightest star that shines above,
Can ne'er a joy so sweet bestow
As one fond smile of Laura's love.

(*Music stops.*) [*Exit*, R.

Enter WILLIE MILLER, L. U. E.

WILLIE. (*Coming down.*) If I can only remain here unnoticed, perhaps I will see her. The resemblance is so striking that I cannot be mistaken. (*Goes behind bench, and leans against it.*)

Re-enter LAURA, L. 1 E., *crosses to rustic chair*, R. C., *and sits.*

LAURA. Of course Marshall is gone!

WILLIE. (*Aside.*) How like her. (*He stirs.*)

LAURA. (*Sees him; screams.*) I thought there was no one here.

WILLIE. You were not very much mistaken. I am nobody of any consequence.

LAURA. (*Aside.*) The poor fellow looks hungry.

WILLIE. Do not be alarmed. I did not mean to frighten you. I only wanted— (LAURA *crosses to hotel door.*)

LAURA. (*At door.*) I'll see. [*Exit* LAURA *into hotel.*

WILLIE. She has forgotten. It would be cruel to remind her.

Re-enter LAURA.

LAURA. (*Offers him a coin.*)

WILLIE. Thank you, but it was not money.

LAURA. Then, what is it?

WILLIE. I only wanted to ask— (*A pause.*)

LAURA. If you want something to eat, you must step over to the restaurant. (*Going.*)

WILLIE. Please do not go. May I—I beg your pardon —may I take the liberty of asking you a question?

LAURA. Certainly. What is it?

WILLIE. If it would not be presuming too much, I would like to know your name.

LAURA. My name can be of no possible interest to you.

WILLIE. You look like some one I knew, but it is a long time since I have seen her—

LAURA. (*Aside.*) He must be slightly demented. (*Loud.*) I presume I look like some one who—

WILLIE. Who was very dear to me.

LAURA. You have made a mistake. The likeness exists only in your imagination.

WILLIE. Have you a brother?

LAURA. I had a brother once, but he—

WILLIE. Died?

LAURA. No, not exactly.

WILLIE. Disgraced the family, or something of that kind?

LAURA. (*Aside.*) He's getting more mysterious every moment. I do not know what to make of him, but he has so aroused my curiosity that I must find out what he means. (*To Willie.*) What do you mean by asking such a question?

WILLIE. Haven't you a brother named Willie?

LAURA. Willie! Yes.

WILLIE. He wishes to speak with you alone, but is afraid that you would not care to meet him.

LAURA. Would not care to meet him! Would not care to see Willie! Only tell me where he is—

WILLIE. Perhaps this will explain. (*Gives her soiled letter.*)

LAURA. (*Reading slowly.*) "Willie, take this little keepsake with you, and never part with it. If you should ever feel that you have not a friend in the world, let this be a token to you of a fond sister's undying love. Though every one should condemn you, I shall always believe in your innocence. Affectionately, Laura." Where did you get this?

WILLIE. My little sister gave it to me years ago with a charm and a lock of her hair. I have read those words over and over a hundred times, and often besprinkled the paper with tears.

LAURA. Where—where's the charm? (WILLIE *gives it to her.*)

LAURA. Willie! Willie! (*Embraces him, sobbing.*)

WILLIE. Poor girl, I'm sorry I make you so unhappy.

LAURA. How changed you are! I would never have known you.

WILLIE. Who is here with you?

LAURA. Papa, mamma, and Marshall Earle.

WILLIE. Has father ever relented?

LAURA. No; he forbade us ever to mention your name.

WILLIE. And mother?

LAURA. She has never ceased to think of you. She still calls you her dear boy. O, Willie, if you saw her cry yesterday you would pity her! A poor tramp came to the door for assistance, and she burst into tears. "Perhaps," she said, "my own poor boy's lot is no better. Would to God I knew where he is or what has become of him."

WILLIE. She did not recognize me, Laura?

LAURA. You don't mean that it was you—

WILLIE. I do. (*Staggers backward.*)

LAURA. What's the matter, Willie?

WILLIE. I'm very, very weak—I've eaten nothing for two days—I have no strength left, but I wanted to see you before—before I— (*Falls back on bench.*)

LAURA. Poor fellow! I'll run and get a glass of wine. It may revive you.

[*Exit* LAURA *into hotel.*

WILLIE. Laura! Laura! She's gone! I'd die for that girl. What if she should tell my father? (*Rising with an effort.*) I don't want to meet him; no, I'll never meet him. He wronged me, he disowned me, he told me never to come near him. I won't. I'll keep out of his way. He may be sorry when he learns the truth, but it will be too late—too late!

[*Exit* WILLIE, L. U. E.

Re-enter LAURA.

LAURA. Gone! (*Calls.*) Willie! Willie!

[*Re-enter* WILLIE.

WILLIE. Did you tell them I was here?

LAURA. No, I didn't say a word. (*Gives him wine.*)

WILLIE. Thanks, Laura. I must go now, but don't say anything to my father. Good-by.

LAURA. (*Kissing him.*) Good-by.

Enter MARSHALL, R. U. E.

LAURA. Why, Marshall!

MAR. Yes. (*A pause.*)

LAURA. (*Apart to* WILLIE.) You don't mind meeting Marshall, do you?

WILLIE. No.

MAR. (*Aside.*) It's Laura Miller and I'm awake!

LAURA. There's no use trying to conceal anything, Marshall; I will tell you all.

MAR. I can see it, Laura, I'm sorry to say.

LAURA. Then why don't you speak to him?

MAR. Why should I speak to him? You are better acquainted with him.

LAURA. I am only a sister to him.

MAR. Then he is—

LAURA. My brother!

MAR. Willie Miller?

LAURA. Yes.

MAR. I beg your pardon, Laura. I didn't know it all, Willie, old fellow, how are you? (*They shake hands.*)

WILLIE. Marshall, you were always a good friend of mine. Don't tell any one that you met me.

Enter MR. *and* MRS. MILLER, L. 2 E.

MRS. M. I thought you had gone across the lake, Laura.

LAURA. No, mamma, I was waiting for Marshall.

WILLIE. (*Apart to* LAURA.) For God's sake, Laura, don't tell them who I am. (*Going* L., LAURA *holds him back.*) O, Willie, don't go without speaking to mamma, please don't! She'll never forgive me if I don't tell her, she has worried about you so.

MRS. M. What does all this mean?

LAURA. 'Tis Willie!

MRS. M. Willie! (*Embraces him.*) My poor boy—poor boy!

MILLER. Oh, I see! The young scamp wants to come back, but he won't find me ready to forgive him. Young man, you ought to be ashamed to show your face here.

WILLIE. I have never done anything that I am ashamed of, sir.

MILLER. You forget yourself. Leave my presence this moment.

MAR. Mr. Miller, don't be so severe with him. Remember that he is your only son.

MILLER. I'm very sorry that he is.

WILLIE. I ask nothing of you, sir, not even your forgiveness. You disowned me, closed the door in my face, made me an outcast. You could do no more.

MILLER. I could have sent you to the penitentiary, and I regret now that I didn't.

WILLIE. I don't think you could. I could have proved my innocence if I were given a chance, but you would not listen to me.

LAURA. Why don't you hear what he has to say, papa?

WILLIE. I do not want to be heard now.

MRS. M. Leslie, I always said that you were too hasty in condemning him.

MILLER. Gracious Heaven! woman, didn't he acknowledge taking the check out of my book?

LAURA. But the circumstances under which—

MILLER. Circumstances—bosh—nonsense

LAURA. Papa, if you would only listen—

MILLER. Listen! I refused to listen to him. Why should I listen to you! Listen! Rubbish!

MRS. M. You're unreasonable.

MILLER. I'll have nothing more to say to him. That settles it.

MRS. M. That just shows how unreasonable you are. There's no necessity for flying into a temper.

WILLIE. Plead no more for me, mother—plead no more for me. God knows I never forged father's name to that check. I don't feel as if I were going to trouble you very long.

MRS. M. Willie, don't—don't talk like that. A mother's love and care will soon bring you back to your former self. Your father must see that he was wrong.

WILLIE. Don't be too hopeful, mother. The end is not far off. Then a mother's love—a father's hate—what of it? I'll tell you who it was that forged the check.

MRS. M. } Who?
LAURA. }

WILLIE. Robert Clarkson. Now I can rest easier. Good-by, mother; good-by, Laura. Father, the punishment which you unjustly inflicted on me in a moment of passion will soon be over, but I forgive you—I forgive you—may God forgive you. (*Falls.*)

MILLER. (*Crossing to* WILLIE.) Willie! Willie! Speak to me! Listen to me! I was hasty—angry—mad—or I could not have done what I did. You are not going to die—no, you must not die till I have atoned for the wrong I have done you. (MARSHALL *lifts him up to bench.*)

WILLIE. Father, I fear it is too late—

MILLER. No, no! You are overcome by fatigue and hunger, but you will soon be better. Laura, get something to revive him. Quick, quick! Ethel, speak to him.

[*Exit* LAURA *into hotel.*

Enter TONY, *hurriedly, from hotel.*

TONY. Here's a dispatch for you, Mr. Earle.

MAR. When did it come? (*Opens it.*)

TONY. Just this minit, sir.

MAR. (*Reads it, starts.*) Poor fellow!

MR. M. No bad news, I hope.

MAR. Very bad news, Mr. Miller. My brother Henry met with a serious accident, and is not expected to live.

TONY. Do you want to send back an answer, sir? The 'bus is just startin' for the train.

MAR. Hold it for a moment. I'll have to go.

Re-enter LAURA.

LAURA. Make him drink this, papa. It will do him good. (*Gives him wine.*) Why, Marshall, are you ill? What has happened?

MAR. I am called away. (*Hands her telegram.*)

WILLIE.
MILLER. MRS. MILLER.
TONY. MARSHALL. LAURA.

Quick CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*A poorly furnished room. Door,* L. *Window,* L. 3 E. *Table,* R. C. *Kitchen chairs* R. *and* L. *of table. Cuspidore. Writing materials, bottle, glass and tobacco on table.* CLARKSON *discovered seated at table,* L., *copying.* MUGGINS *leaning over table, smoking a pipe.*

CLARK. (*Tearing papers.*) Confound it! I don't seem to get it right.

MUG. If I couldn't do no better than that, I'd jist let it alone. See?

CLARK. Perhaps you would like to try your hand?

MUG. No, sir. My education in that line was neglected. If you was as slick at making checks as you are at fixin' up mortgages—

CLARK. Hush–sh. You talk too much.

MUG. What time did you say the train was due?

CLARK. Ten minutes after nine. It's a quarter past now.

MUG. Do you think he'll come?

CLARK. Of course I do. If that telegram don't fetch him, my name isn't Clarkson.

MUG. What did you say?

CLARK. Brother met with a serious accident—not expected to live. Being taken care of at this number.

MUG. I thought I heard some one comin' up-stairs. Sh–h. (*Goes to door and listens.*)

CLARK. (*Spreads newspaper over table and reads.*) Coming?

MUG. No; false alarm. (*Returns to table, and sits on end of it.*)

CLARK. (*Holding up forged check.*) If I can get this cashed, I'll clear out.

MUG. (*Examines it.*) That ought to go. 'Taint just right, but it might be worse. Nothin' small about you, is there?

CLARK. I'll need every cent of it.

MUG. Where do I come in?

CLARK. You're not implicated in this job.

MUG. But I'm implicated in the stuff, or I don't know myself.

CLARK. Look at the desperate fix I'm in. Only for the "pull," I'd never get bail.

MUG. Goin' to jump it, eh?

CLARK. What else can I do?

MUG. Nice joke, to let Anderson whistle for three thousand.

CLARK. That won't bother me a little bit.

MUG. How about the Metropolitan Investment Company?

CLARK. Just about ready for a crash. I get only a third of the boodle. That's for a reserve fund, in case the worst comes. Lawyers are pretty expensive people to do business with.

MUG. If this here guy what's comin' caves in an' gives up the proofs, you won't git, will you?

CLARK. I've got to, whatever turns up.

MUG. You'll act square by me, anyhow?

CLARK. If this check go, I'll give you a hundred dollars.

MUG. I don't take nothin' less than five. (*Comes off table.*)

CLARK. We'll see about that, Mr. Muggins.

MUG. No, you don't git out of it so easy. See? Where would you be but for me? Didn't I introduce you to society? Didn't I put you spongin' on the Millers? Didn't I make a gentleman out of you?

CLARK. You give yourself too much credit, Muggins.

MUG. Why, 'twas I drawed out the whole plan for you.

CLARK. You're mistaken. The plan was mine.

MUG. Didn't I place old Miller for you? Didn't I hold him up for you? Didn't I make a hero of you?

CLARK. Didn't I pay you well for your trouble?

MUG. Yes; but how many dark nights did I have to spot him before we struck it right. Look at the risk I took.

CLARK. Your work ended there, but mine only commenced. Think of the part I had to play.

MUG. That's all right. If you only took my advice and let well enough alone, the chances are you'd have married that snug little fortune. I told you, Bobby, that you made the mistake of your life when you went dabblin' in that there forgery business.

CLARK. I'll make it two hundred.

MUG. Now, look here, Clarkson, you're not usin' me jist right. You give me the cold shoulder and try to cut down my allowance every time we do a job. We've been partners a long time, and you always get the best of every deal. 'Tain't square, that's what it ain't. You live high and dress like a dude, while I board in cheap lodgin'-houses and pass for a common loafer. You're a bigger rogue than I am, for I don't pretend to nothin'—

CLARK. And you'll never amount to anything.

MUG. (*Crosses to* L.) I guess you can get along without me to-night. (*Going.*)

CLARK. Don't go, Mug, old boy. You don't need to get on your ear about a little thing like that. I'll give you half of what I raise on this paper. There's my hand on it.

MUG. (*Resuming seat.*) All right. I'm satisfied.

CLARK. Now, then, the next thing to be done is to destroy all these papers, and drop this seal into the river. If I can only get Earle's memorandum book, there won't be enough evidence left to indict me.

MUG. How about Walter?

CLARK. He's solid. He has been right with me since the trouble commenced. I expect him here in a little while. Why, it was I put him to work at Miller's.

MUG. (*Goes to door.*) I thought I heard something. (*Listens.*) That fellow will break his neck if he don't look out. (*Opens door cautiously, looks out.*) 'Tis only Walter.

Enter WALTER.

WALTER. He's coming—coming—coming! Make no noise. Elliott is shadowing the house. He just went across the street to get a drink.

CLARK. Keep up your pluck, boys. (*Lies down,* R., *and covers himself with comforter.* MUGGINS *puts on mask.*)

WALTER. (*Putting on mask.*) Get behind the door, Muggins.

MUG. Wait till he knocks. (*Music. Knock at door.*) Come in.

Enter MARSHALL.

CLARK. (*Moaning.*) Take—me—away. Take—me—away. (MARSHALL *crosses to* CLARKSON. MUGGINS *locks the door and puts the key in his pocket. Music stops.*)

MAR. Poor fellow! What has happened?

CLARK. (*Rising.*) Why! Oh, is that you, Mr. Earle?

MAR. (*Aside.*) Clarkson! My doom is sealed. (*Goes to door, and finds it locked.*)

MUG. No, you don't.

CLARK. How did you tear yourself away from Laura? Got my telegram all right?

MAR. Robert Clarkson, what is your business with me?

CLARK. Boys, the papers are mine, the rest is yours! (MUGGINS *and* WALTER *go through his pockets and take money, watch, etc.*)

MUG. (*Giving letter found on* MARSHALL.) That's all for you.

CLARK. (*Reading letter*, c.) "Dearest Marshall: Papa is going to invite you to spend a day or two with us. I shall be delighted to see you. I have lots of news for you. Beware of the *forger*, I understand he's out on bail. Yours lovingly, Laura."

MAR. (*Coming down.*) Clarkson, give me that letter.

CLARK. (*Tearing it in pieces.*) Certainly, it's no use to me. (MUGGINS *and* WALTER *go up* R., *examining articles taken from* MARSHALL.)

CLARK. By the way, Earle, you had a little memorandum book that I would like to have. What became of it?

MAR. That is my business.

CLARK. It is very important that I should have it, and I want to know where it is.

MAR. I am not prepared to furnish you with the information you require just now.

CLARK. Any time to-night will do. And I might as well tell you that it will depend entirely on how you answer my questions, whether you shall see Laura Miller again or not.

MAR. Miss Miller told you very plainly what you were, and I repeat it: Robert Clarkson, you are a coward.

CLARK. Be careful. The odds are slightly in my favor.

MAR. Which proves what I say. If you were a man you would meet me alone; but, being a cur, you dare not.

CLARK. I tell you, Earle, I'm a dangerous man to meddle with.

MAR. A treacherous scoundrel, you mean.

CLARK. (*Threatening to strike him.*) Do you value your

life? If you do, I'd advise you to be more guarded in your remarks.

MAR. You can do your worst. I defy you.

CLARK. (*Sits at table, lights a cigar, and assumes an air of indifference.*) It seems to me that you don't display very good judgment in striking such a defiant attitude.

MAR. When I want advice, I do not come to you for it.

CLARK. But you will get it, in spite of your objection. Now, if you would say to me, "Mr. Clarkson, I know I'm placed at a disadvantage here to-night, but I believe I can confer a favor on you by surrendering some papers which can be of no use to me"—if you would say this to me in an apologetic tone of voice, it may relieve you from the suspense which must necessarily be torturing to a man of your fine sensibilities and humanitarian impulses.

MAR. I have nothing to say to you, no apology to make to you, nothing to surrender to you.

CLARK. (*Pointing revolver to him.*) Even at the muzzle of this?

MAR. No.

CLARK. You know that the papers I want are in the safe in Miller's office, don't you?

MAR. What of it?

CLARK. I want the combination of the safe, that's all. If you don't give it, you'll never leave this room alive.

MAR. Betray my employer, and to you! Never!

CLARK. But let me reason with you. You seem to forget that you are the victim of a very deeply laid plot. You seem to ignore the fact that you are completely in my power. You don't take into consideration that if I fail to carry my point by persuasion, I'll resort to other means.

MUG. That's the way to lay down the law to him.

CLARK. Now, you just keep very still. Do you hear?

MUG. Excuse me, boss; didn't think it made no difference.

CLARK. Now, Earle, to be candid, I don't care to take any risks. That little memorandum book of yours must be had, whatever it costs to get it. You see, it is the connecting link in the chain of evidence that has been making life miserable to me for the past few days. That little book means your liberty as well as mine.

MAR. You will never get it through me.

CLARK. Let me finish. Anticipating the possibility of your refusal, I have made other arrangements which I think will overcome your stubbornness. How admirably I have succeeded, you can judge for yourself.

MAR. You waste your eloquence to no purpose. You must be proud of your accomplishments.

CLARK. Well, rather. I think this was a very nicely put-up job. I rent a room, and am anxious for a private interview with you. I am puzzling myself as to how that interview should be brought about, when your unlooked-for visit to Sylvania Lake suggests a telegram. Most punctually you respond. You enter a room, expecting to find your brother seriously ill, and instead you find —

MAR. A den of thieves.

CLARK. Pardon me. You find you have been caught in a cleverly set trap. Now, that trap has been set for a purpose, and if the purpose should not be accomplished, some one will be hurt.

MUG. You bet your life 'twon't be Clarkson.

CLARK. I have no doubt your friends, especially dear Laura, would be somewhat shocked to see in big bold type in the morning papers the heading, "Died by his own hand."

MAR. What do you mean, sir?

CLARK. I mean that it shall appear a clear case of suicide. Beside your corpse shall be found a bottle of poison. This, remember, in a locality of questionable reputation.

MAR. You dare not carry out your threats. You have enough to answer for, without adding murder to your category of crime.

CLARK. Have no fears on that score. Before your remains are discovered, I shall be in parts unknown. If you choose death rather than give a little secret away, what is it but suicide?

MAR. (*Aside.*) Will this torture never end?

CLARK. You can be a very conscientious young man and yet not sacrifice your life in defence of a false sense of duty.

MAR. Once and for all I tell you, Clarkson —

CLARK. Hold on, young man. Now that I have taken the trouble to explain to you the nature of the position in which you are placed, I ask you, for the last time, which shall it be—the combination of the safe—or death?

MAR. Not—not—the combination.

CLARK. (*Pouring poison into glass.*) If my case should ever come up for trial, this will exclude your testimony. See? There is enough in this glass to kill three men. When you have joined the silent majority, the papers on which you set so high a price will be worthless. If you do not see fit to change your mind in three minutes, you'll drink the contents of this glass.

MAR. Not a drop of it shall pass my lips.

CLARK. That is what you say, but I assure you that you are mistaken.

MAR. Give me a little time to think.

CLARK. Two minutes and a half more.

MAR. Merciful Providence, what shall become of me! I must—I shall --

CLARK. (*Holding watch in one hand, revolver in the other.*) Drink, or in two minutes we shall force it down your throat.

MAR. (*Taking glass, and raising it to his lips.*) 'Tis hard to die at any time, but to die like this is maddening. If I could only send a message to my mother! Good God, in Thee I trust! The truth must be known. My memory will not be stained.

CLARK. (*Rising.*) One minute!

MAR. Were it even two to one, I still would; hope but three such fiends I cannot conquer. There is not a man among you. (*Again raises glass.*)

CLARK. Thirty seconds!

MAR. (*Aside.*) Good-bye, Laura, good-bye. 'Twere nobler far, a man to die.

CLARK. Time!

MAR. And die — (*Dashes contents of glass into* CLARKSON'S *eyes; revolver drops from* CLARKSON'S *hand;* MARSHALL *quickly picks it up.* CLARKSON *staggers, stumbles, and falls.* MUGGINS *and* WALTER *rush on* MARSHALL, *and struggle for possession of revolver.* MARSHALL *overpowers them, and crosses to door.*)

CLARK. (*Rising.*) My eyes! My eyes! Damnation! They're on fire! I'm ruined! I'm blind! Where is he? Where is he? (*Groans.*) Muggins! Walter! Curse you pair of worthless devils! Help! help! (*Falls,* c.)

MAR. (*At door.*) Murder! Police! police! (*Breaks a light of glass in window.* MUGGINS *and* WALTER *cross toward door.* MARSHALL *presents revolver.*) *Get back! Get back!* (*They retire, trembling.* MARSHALL *fires three shots to attract attention.*) The key! The key!

ELLIOTT. (*Without, hammering at door*). Open! Open! (*Forces in door.*)

Enter ELLIOTT.

MAR. Thank Heaven!

MUGGINS. WALTER. MARSHALL. ELLIOTT. CLARKSON *down.*

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*Same as in Act I.*

SALLIE *discovered seated in rocking-chair.*

SALLIE. Sure it's the illegant times intirely that I have. (*Fans herself.*) If the missus comes back and finds me wearin' her dress, I'll be after wishin' I was in Skibbereen. Faith, I'm in dread she'll be wearin' mine to get even wid me when I go out visitin'. (*Rises and looks at dress.*) It couldn't be a better fit if 'twas made for me. 'Tis the pity of the world that I have anything to do besides wearin' nice dresses an puttin' on shtyle, it's so becomin' to me. When Tony Gillespie comes he'll think I'm a rale lady. I tould him I was "at home," and I hope he'll have the good manners to presint his card. Oh, but sure I forgot he's comin' in by the back door! Tony is all right, if he'd only— (*Listens.*) That sounds like his brogues. (*Goes to door*, L., *looks out.*) Come in, Tony, the servants are all out.

Enter TONY, L.

TONY. (*Shaking hands.*) Is that yourself, and how are you, Sallie?

SALLIE. (*Affecting* MRS. MILLER'S *manner.*) I'm feelin' purty well, Tony, thank you for kind onquiries. Be sated. (*Offers him a chair, and takes one near him.*)

TONY. (*Aside.*) This bates feedin' pigs out at the lake all to pieces.

SALLIE. Has you been to Sylvania convayniently?

TONY. Indeed I agree with you.

SALLIE. (*Aside*) How stupidity he is. (*Aloud.*) I mean is it long since you were at the lake?

TONY. I was there last Tuesday.

SALLIE. I assume there's nothin' uncommonplace happened since I took my exits.

TONY. Eggs, is it? You're mistaken there, Sallie; sure the chickens wasn't layin' when you left.

SALLIE. I didn't mention anything so vulgarity as eggs. I said exits, which manes one's belongin's.

TONY. Oh, I see. Yis, yis. You must excuse me, I'm only a couple of days in the city.

SALLIE. Sartinly, Tony. You're very excusably.

TONY. (*Taking pipe and tobacco out of his pocket.*) You wouldn't have a match wid you?

SALLIE. You're not goin' to smoke that horrid pipe, are you? I can't ondure the odor of tobacco.

TONY. You got very refined all of a suddint.

SALLIE. I can't help it. There's refinement everywhere around me.

TONY. There's a trifle too much of it for me. (*Rises.*)

SALLIE. (*Without affectation.*) You're not goin', are you? Sure you're not here at all yet hardly.

TONY. (*Sits.*) That sounds more natural. Sure I was thinking all along that you were some one else.

SALLIE. It's myself that knows what's the matter wid you. 'Tis of Nellie Flaherty you're thinkin' this minit.

TONY. It's mighty little I'd be doin'. Sure Nellie is married.

SALLIE. Go on! Who to?

TONY. Some skate from Wisconsin.

SALLIE. I never heard a word of it.

TONY. Nor I ayther till they tould me.

SALLIE. When did you see Julia?

TONY. About a week ago. She's after bleachin' her hair. I hardly knowed her till I saw her.

SALLIE. Is she as freckled as ever?

TONY. Yis, an' worse.

SALLIE. Is Jack at the Park?

TONY. Yis; himself and Pat had a little bit of a difference, but they fixed it up all right.

SALLIE. What's Jim doin'?

TONY. Bossin' a gang on the new bridge.

SALLIE. Is Maggie goin' to tache this term?

TONY. She is that same. She got the school last week.

SALLIE. Excuse me for a minit, till I get you a cup of tay.

TONY. Oh, don't bother, Sallie.

SALLIE. I'll be back in less than no time. [*Exit*, L.

TONY. It bates the mischief how consayted Sallie got since she left the country. It's a mighty poor combination thim jawbreakers makes wid her brogue.

Re-enter SALLIE, L., *with china tea cups, saucers, sugar and cream, spoons, etc., which she places on table.*

SALLIE. Make yourself perfectly at home, Tony, I'll be back in a second. [*Exit*, L.

TONY. (*Taking cup.*) Look at the size of thim cups, an' she tellin' me to make myself perfectly at home! 'Tisn't the likes of thim that would do it, nor what's goin' to be in 'em ayther, for the matter o' that.

Re-enter SALLIE, L., *bringing teapot; sits at table with* TONY, *and gives him tea.*

SALLIE. This tay is delicious. (*Drinking it.*) The missus says so.

TONY. Sallie, if you take my advice you'll do what the missus tells you, and don't mind what she says.

MRS. MILLER *and* LAURA *appear at door*, C., *in street costume.* LAURA *wears a rose.* SALLIE, *frightened at seeing* MRS. MILLER, *drops cup and breaks it.*

TONY. "There's many a slip between the cup an' the lip." Never mind, Sallie, you might as well spill it as drink it, for all the good 'twill do you.

SALLIE. (*Aside.*) I'll be after gettin' my walkin' papers this minit, so I will.

Enter MRS. MILLER *and* LAURA.

MRS. M. *My* dress! The idea!

SALLIE. The tay only spilt on the carpet, m'am.

MRS. M. And one of my beautiful china cups in pieces!

SALLIE. I didn't think you'd be home so soon, m'am.

MRS. M. Leave my house this instant.

TONY. (*Rising.*) If this place isn't good enough for Sallie, I guess it's about time I was goin', too.

[*Exeunt* SALLIE *and* TONY, L., *followed by* MRS. MILLER.

LAURA. (*Gathering up pieces of broken cup. Music.*) Only a broken cup! What does it matter? To-night there may be a broken heart, but it won't be Sallie's. The trial will end to night. It makes little difference to me whether Robert Clarkson be found guilty or not guilty. The verdict, whatever it may be, cannot make me despise him any more nor any less than I do now. (*Puts pieces of cup on table; sits*, R.) I cannot bear to think that Marshall is going away. I'll be so lonely when he's gone. (*Taking rose in her hand.*) This is his last present. Good-by, Marshall Earle! This beautiful rose will not be to me perfume half as sweet as your memory! Flowers may bloom and wither, but my love, never. (*Sinks into chair. Music stops.*)

Re-enter MRS. MILLER, L.

MRS. M. Servants are the greatest torment of my life. I don't know what to do with them.

LAURA. Has Sallie gone, mamma?

MRS. M. No; she pleaded with me so hard, and seemed so truly sorry, that I gave her another chance.

LAURA. I'm so glad.

[*Exit* LAURA, L.

MRS. M. 'Tis just as well. The next may be worse. (*Sits*, R.)

Enter MR. MILLER, C.

MILLER. Robert Clarkson will go to the penitentiary.

MRS. M. Do you really think so?

MILLER. There can be no doubt about it. (*Sits*, L. C.)

MRS. M. I think it is perfectly dreadful to have our name dragged into such unpleasant notoriety.

MILLER. Surely no one can attach any blame to us.

MRS. M. But Laura, poor child, is taking the affair so much to heart, that I have grave fears for her health.

MILLER. The discovery of Clarkson's duplicity was the very best thing that could have happened, as far as our daughter is concerned. She will forget all about it in a few weeks.

MRS. M. But her engagement to him—people will talk—

MILLER. She never cared for Clarkson, and became engaged to him merely to please you.

MRS. M. Oh, no, Leslie, dear, it was to please you. You consented.

MILLER. My consent was only a matter of form, Ethel.

MRS. M. But I didn't insist.

MILLER. And I'm sure I didn't. (*Sits*, R.

Re-enter LAURA, L.

LAURA. Is it all over, papa? (*Sits on settee*, R.)

MILLER. Not yet, but soon will be.

WILLIE MILLER, *well dressed*, *appears at door*, R.

MRS. M. Come, Willie. You look a little better this evening.

WILLIE (C.). I feel better than I have felt for years. It seems as if I were a new man.

MILLER. Willie, my boy, mistakes *have* been made. You have made some, so have I. Let us draw the curtain over the past, and begin anew. I am now perfectly satisfied of your innocence, and I am glad to say so. It has been clearly proved to me that you were the victim of a bad man's wicked designs, and here there is a lesson to be learned. Beware of such men as Robert Clarkson. You are old enough now to have sense, and to know the value of money. (*Gives him check-book.*) Use this wisely. There

are ten thousand dollars to your credit in the First National Bank.

WILLIE. Thank you, father. I am very grateful.

MRS. M. (*Crossing to Willie.*) I knew my boy was innocent. (*Kisses him.*)

LAURA. (*Rises and embraces him.*) And I always believed in your innocence, didn't I, Willie?

WILLIE. You did, Laura, and I shall never forget it. (*Aside.*) Ten thousand dollars! 'Tisn't very long ago since twenty-five cents looked pretty big to me.

Enter MARSHALL, C.

MILLER. Marshall! (*Rises.*)

MRS. M. The verdict?

MAR. Guilty!

MILLER. And the sentence?

MAR. Eight years in the penitentiary.

LAURA. Eight years! (*Sinks into chair.*)

MRS. M. Pardon me for a moment. Laura is not very well. Come, dear.

[*Exeunt* MRS. M. *and* LAURA, R.

WILLIE. Clarkson would have dragged me down if he could. It was his designing schemes that sent me adrift on the world. But now he pays the penalty, and I'm not sorry for him. [*Exit.* R.

MILLER. (*Sits.*) Marshall, I believe that vest pocket memorandum book of yours went a long way toward convicting Clarkson.

MAR. It was very damaging testimony, Mr. Miller, and the State's attorney laid particular stress on it. No one foresaw the effect of such evidence more clearly than Clarkson, and I do not wonder that he should have tried to take my life to be rid of it.

MILLER. Marshall, I have known you better since this trial commenced than I ever knew you before. I always placed unlimited confidence in your integrity, but I was not aware that you possessed such noble traits of character as have appeared through all these trying scenes. Instead of being my confidential clerk, you will from this day be my partner in business.

MAR. Mr. Miller, no one appreciates your generosity more than I do. I can never sufficiently thank you, but—

MILLER. Not at all, Marshall, not at all.

MAR. I cannot possibly accept.

MILLER. What's this? (*Rises.*)

MAR. I am going to leave you.

MILLER. Going to leave me !

MAR. Yes, sir. I am going away.

MILLER. (*Rising.*) Where are you going ?

MAR. I have not yet fully decided.

MILLER. This is a very unexpected turn of affairs. What is your reason for leaving me ?

MAR. A foolish one, but I cannot help it.

MILLER. Please explain.

MAR. I am going away so that we may forget each other.

MILLER. You and I ?

MAR. No, sir ; your daughter and I.

MILLER. Oh, I see. That's different.

MAR. Mrs. Miller is strongly opposed to our attachment. Whatever may happen, I shall treat her wishes with respect ; and I can see no other way of doing so.

MILLER. I think you are mistaken. I know my wife thinks a great deal of you.

Enter MRS. MILLER, R.

Ethel, I have some news for you.

MRS. M. What is it ?

MILLER. Marshall is going to leave me.

MRS. M. To leave you ?

MILLER. Yes.

MRS. M. You could not have told me anything that would surprise me more. What is the matter, Marshall ?

MILLER. I'll answer for him. He thinks that Laura is the sweetest girl in the world. She thinks there's nobody like Marshall. Marshall thinks that Laura's mother does not want him for a son-in-law.

MRS. M. And what does Laura's father think ?

MILLER. He thinks that the young people are all right.

MRS. M. Laura ought to have something to say herself.

MILLER. That's just what I've been thinking all along. Call her, Ethel.

[*Exit* MRS. MILLER, R.

My wife does not seem so very pronounced in her opposition to you, after all.

MAR. She must have changed her mind since our last interview on the subject.

MILLER. Well, you know, that is a woman's prerogative.

Re-enter MRS. MILLER *with* LAURA, R.

MRS. M. Laura may now decide for herself. I shall offer no further opposition.

MILLER. You will accept the partnership if you stay, Marshall ?

MAR. Yes ; but there is another partnership—

MILLER. Laura, I propose making a partner of Marshall, but it seems your consent is necessary before we can come to an understanding.

LAURA. Of course you have my consent.

MILLER. But Marshall wants you—

MRS. M. To become his wife.

MAR. (*Taking her hand.*) Yes, Laura.

LAURA. It is just as well to take you into our confidence, mamma. (*Enter* WILLIE, R.) If I do not become Marshall's wife you'll have an old maid on your hands, because I told Marshall long ago that I'd never marry any one else.

WILLIE. Mother, give them your blessing. I give them mine.

MRS. M. With all my heart. Bless you, my children. (*Embraces* LAURA.)

MILLER. Shake hands, Marshall, we are partners.

LAURA. And Marshall and I will be partners, too.

MAR. (*Putting his arm around her.*) Yes, Laura, partners for life.

MR. MILLER. MARSHALL. WILLIE.

MRS. MILLER. LAURA.

CURTAIN.

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